

Press release: PM call with Prime Minister of Sweden following Stockholm attack: 8 April 2017

The Prime Minister called Prime Minister Löfven of Sweden today, to express her condolences and those of the British people for the terrible attack that took place in Stockholm yesterday.

She was clear that the UK stands firmly by Sweden's side, and they agreed on the importance of working together to tackle these threats, which we all continue to face.

Statement by the Spokesperson on the so-called Presidential elections and the referendum on amending the name of the Georgian

The European Union does not recognise the framework in which the so-called Presidential elections and the referendum on amending the name of the Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia are due to take place on 9 April.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia, including through its co-chairmanship of the Geneva International Discussions and the EU Monitoring Mission.

The European Union reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders.

Press release: Revenge Porn Helpline Given Further Funding

A helpline dedicated to supporting victims of revenge porn is to get

additional funding, the Minister for Women, Equalities and Early Years, Caroline Dinenage announced today.

The Revenge Porn Helpline launched in 2015 to help tackle the problem of people sharing intimate images online as a way of seeking revenge, humiliating or blackmailing individuals.

The service has been funded by the Government since its launch and was given £178,000 to run for two years. The service will receive a further £80,000 in 2017-18 to ensure victims continue to receive the support they need.

Since its launch the helpline has taken over 6000 calls. The service supports men and women but is part of a wider government commitment to eliminate violence against women and girls, backed by £100 million funding.

Minister for Women, Equalities and Early Years, Caroline Dinenage said:

Intimate photos or videos should never be shared without a person's consent, let alone be posted online as an act of revenge.

For too long, people felt they had to face this problem on their own but we will not tolerate it. That's why we introduced new laws to make this an offence and set up this helpline to provide people with help and advice.

This funding means we can help hundreds more people to get these images taken down, as well as helping them get the emotional support they might need as victims of this awful crime.

The helpline – run by South West Grid for Learning – links callers with law enforcement and internet companies to get content taken down, as well as providing information on legal help available and their rights.

It was set-up alongside the introduction of a new offence in the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, covering the sharing of images both online and offline. The offence carries a maximum sentence of up to two years in prison.

A breakdown of calls to the helpline since it was established shows that around 75 per cent seeking advice and support are female and 25 per cent of calls relating to men.

Laura Higgins, Online Safety Operations Manager for the helpline said:

We are absolutely delighted with the Minister's decision to provide continuation funding for the Revenge Porn Helpline. The service has seen an increase in calls in 2017 and there is clearly a need for our specialist advice and support.

Since launching in 2015 we have helped thousands of victims and have received incredible feedback from clients, we are glad that we can continue to do so.

The helpline is available on 0845 6000 459 from 10.00am – 4.00pm, Monday to Friday, and messages left outside these hours will be returned. Emails can be sent at any time to help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- For further information, please contact the GEO press office on 0207 783 8300.
- For further information from the helpline or for media bids, please contact Laura Higgins on 07899 905638 or laura.higgins@swgfl.org.uk

Statement by the Spokesperson on the roadside explosion in South Central Somalia

Thursday's road side explosion in Lower Shabelle near Golweyn village taking a large number of civilian lives increased the already great suffering faced by Somalia. Our thoughts go to the families of the victims and to all Somali people.

Drought has caused significant deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and especially Somalia. As a result hundreds of thousands find themselves on the move.

The European Union remains strongly committed to Somalia and its people. Reconstruction of a stable and democratic country, benefitting its population, and a Somali owned security sector to combat terrorism is key for development and the security of the region.

Speech: "The United Kingdom supports the U.S. air strike on the Al Shayrat

airfield because war crimes have consequences.”

Thank you Madam President,

I deeply regret that the previous speaker showed more outrage against the United States than against the Assad regime that on Tuesday deliberately dropped chemical weapons, killing over a hundred men, women, and children in the most barbaric fashion.

More than three and a half years ago, the Syrian regime made a pledge. They would join the 189 countries who had already signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. They would reveal the full extent of their chemical arsenal and proceed with its full destruction.

What spurred this pledge was a chemical weapons attack. That time in Ghouta. Hundreds if not thousands were dead. There were images of men, women, and children choking, foaming at the mouth, clearly asphyxiated.

Three and a half years after a historically heinous war crime was committed, after the stockpiles were supposed to be destroyed, Assad on Tuesday, showed us yet again – this time in Idlib – that he is capable of redefining horror. Tuesday’s attack must be fully investigated. Impunity cannot be the norm.

We will continue to work with our partners on this Security Council to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

The United Kingdom supports the U.S. air strike on the Al Shayrat airfield because war crimes have consequences. And the greatest war criminal of all, Bashar al Assad, has now been put on notice.

The US strike was a proportionate response to unspeakable acts that gave rise to overwhelming humanitarian distress. It was also a strong effort to save lives, by ensuring that such acts never happen again.

The resolution that we adopted three and a half years ago provided a framework for the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. It had a clear author and a clear guarantor. At the time Russian assured us that Assad would fully declare his chemical arsenal and would continue to cooperate with international inspectors. Perhaps that was the assurance that Russia received from Assad.

And perhaps Russia has now learnt the hard lesson that backing a war criminal comes with its own consequence: humiliation.

Russia has barely any support from the Arab world for its policy of propping up the criminal Assad regime as it carries out chemical weapons attacks against its own people. Russia needs to listen to this Council, listen to the Arab world, listen to the rest of the international community, above all listen to the Syrian people. Their message is clear: end Assad’s bombs, his

use of chemical weapons, his torture dungeons.

Instead, Russia has given Assad everything he could dream of. Without Russia's seven vetoes in the Security Council defying the views of other members of this Council, Asad would now have faced sanctions and justice. And what did Russia get for its unconditional support?

Assad ignores Russia's requests for him to obey a ceasefire. Asad defies Russia's request for him not to gas his own people. Asad thumbs his nose at Russia's calls for Asad to join a peace process. Russia sits here today humiliated by its failure to bring to heel a puppet dictator entirely propped up by Russia itself, and Hizbollah, and Iran.

And let me bust some myths about our private negotiations over the last couple of days. We were seeking agreement on a draft resolution. I repeatedly asked the Russian Federation: why could you not support our draft resolution? If you want the truth why did you not want the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to have access to the places, the people, and the information they need? What possible excuse do you have for keeping that information away from the investigators? What reason do you have to carry on protecting Asad? If you care about the UN Charter, why protect a dictator who has violated international law time and time again? Answer came there none.

There is another way for Russia and I appeal to the Russian Federation to abandon its failed strategy. To join the rest of this Council in our call for justice and accountability. To end your protection of a war criminal. To join us, all of us, in supporting a genuine political progress that would lead to a transition to a more legitimate and representative government.

The only reason why we are here. Why these discussions are being had in this moment, in this chamber, is because the international community has not done enough.

Things can be different.

The difference that can be made. The difference that must be made, lies in a political solution. And that won't happen if we take the familiar route that has plagued this Council and the countries of the region, millions of Syrians looking for a future. The new road must see the Syrian regime engage. The new road must have Russia and Iran not only at the table, but negotiating in good faith.

We are sitting in the halls of the organisation that was built to guide us when peace seems out of reach. The United Nations has a vital role in convening those negotiations and helping the parties to resolve their disputes

The agenda has been set and it is long overdue that a proper negotiation on the future Syrian-led transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people happens. Asad must engage in serious discussion about that future to meet those aspirations of all Syrians.

Madam President in conclusion,

The United Kingdom supports the U.S. action as an appropriate response to a heinous act by a brutal and uncaring dictator. By a dictator who thinks that gassing his people is somehow a legitimate step on the road to stability.

It is time now to get a genuine political process back up and running. Those discussions may be long and difficult. But the people of Syria deserve nothing less.

And if we want to ensure that the shocking images that have haunted us this week are truly confined to history, then this is our duty.

Thank you.